

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Investigations Division of the Office of Inspector General inquired into an allegation that the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) improperly classified crime statistics in the 8th District.

The investigation concluded that the 8th District improperly and incorrectly classified at least 177 incidents during the time period January 01, 2013 to July 31, 2013. The 177 incidents stemmed from individuals having “lost” their wallets or purses and subsequently experiencing unauthorized charges on their credit cards or debit cards.

These incidents were classified as Signal 21 (Miscellaneous) or Signal 21L (Lost or Stolen) instead of properly being classified as Signal 67 (Theft). This incorrect classification resulted in underreported crime statistics because neither Signal 21 nor 21L is included in Uniform Crime Report (UCR) statistics while Signal 67 is included.

During this same time period, an additional 249 incidents were classified as Signal 21 or Signal 21L wherein individuals “lost” their wallets or purses with no unauthorized charges to their credit/debit cards reported.¹

The lack of information resulting from the misclassification deprived the leadership of the 8th District and NOPD with knowledge that would have revealed a pattern of crimes.

The NOPD agreed with the report’s findings, and stated that the classification policy would be changed effective January 1, 2014.

¹ Many of the reports state that there were no unauthorized charges. Many of the reports also state that the complainant canceled their credit/debit cards. At the time of this report, no follow-up investigations have been conducted to determine if unauthorized charges have appeared on any of these 249 cards after the initial reporting.